Electric Arc Furnace Industry

771. SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to refer to reply to Unstarred Question 3180 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 21st August, 1987 and state whether economics of the Electric Arc Furnace industry has since been reviewed with a view to determining a strategy for the growth of the industry, if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons for the inordinate delay in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI M. L. FOTEDAR): Data is being collected for carrying out a review of the Economics of the Electric Arc Furnace Industry. The review is not yet complete.

Committee/Body to Monitor Drought and Flood Relief Work

772. SHRI S. S. AHLUWALIA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Central Government have set up any Committee/Body to monitor the drought and flood relief work and also oversee and ensure that funds/grants earmarked for relief work and granted to State Governments are properly utilised;

(b) if not, how can the above objectives be met;

(c) whether Government have atleast taken suitable measures in respect of the cases reported in different newspapers about the misuse of relief funds and materials;

(d) if so, the number of such cases which have been probed and the number of officers/functionaries punished alongwith the nature of punishment awarded in each case;

(e) whether Government propose to introduce concurrent audit to deal with relief expenditure which will eliminate many cover ups at a later date and minimise misuse to a greater extent; and

(f) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND COOPERATION IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA): (a) and (b) Yes Sir. A Cabinet Committee on Drought (CCD) has been set up under the chairmanship of Prime Minister, in order to initiate appropriate and timely measures for providing relief to drought and flood affected areas and to keep a close watch on the implementation of various measures.

(c) and (d) Primary responsibility of execution of the relief measures in the wake of natural calamities is essentially of the State Government concerned. As such Government of India do not collect such information.

(e) and (f) Provision exists for concurrent audit. Government of India would arrange for such audit of relief expenditure, as and when considered necessary.

Assistance to Farmers

773. SHRI S. S. AHLUWALIA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that due to death of live-stock the farmers in drought affected States, particularly in Bihar, are experiencing great hardships in undertaking ploughing operations;

(b) whether Government have taken any step to render assistance to such affected farmers in the country particularly in Bihar; and

(c) if so, what are the details of assistance provided to such farmers; and, if not, the reasons thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND COOPERATION IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA): (a) Small and Marginal farmers in the flood affected areas of Bihar are reported to be experiencing hardships in taking up ploughing operations.

(b) and (c) The State Government has allocated Rs. 7.5 lakhs for providing subsidy to small and marginal farmers on the Integrated Rural Development pattern and has also arranged for institutional credit to enable small and marginal farmers to purchase bullocks.

Encouragement to Farmers for Rabi Cultivation

774. SHRI S. S AHLUWALIA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have urged and encouraged farmers to go in for Rabi cultivation, only in the areas where this is possible;

(b) if so, what guidance and help is being extended to them for this;

(c) whether any assessment has been made of the likely production of foodgrains that can be had out of Rabi cultivation;

(d) how much of the loss suffered due to drought could be covered up;

(e) whether Government have kept any contingency plans ready to meet the food shortage if the weather continues to be unfavourable in the forthcoming period; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND COOPERATION IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) In the National Conference for launching the Rabi Campaign held on October 6-7, 1987, the Rabi production strategy was reviewed with the State representatives. The strategy to be adopted during Rabi 1987 includes (i) the involvement of extension experts of fertilizer industry to promote use of fertilizers, their participation in farmers' training programme at the village level and active association in disseminating messages for maximising agricultural production; (ii) scientific management of water resources; (iii) ensuring judicious use of scarce water at critical stages of crop growth; (iv) optimal use of agricultural inputs; (v) diversion of area from high water consuming crops like wheat to low water intensive crops like oilseeds and pulses through extension media; (vi) ensuring quick availability of credit and conversion of short-term loans into medium-term loans in drought affected areas; and (vii) quickening the pace of implementation for full utilisation of funds under Small and Marginal Farmers Programme, National Oilseeds, Development Programme, National Watershed Development Programme, Oilseeds Thrust Programme etc.

(c) and (d) Firm estimates of production for the year 1987-88 are not yet due from the States. In order to meet the likely shortfall of foodgrains in kharif, in the Rabi Conference cited it was decided to achieve a target of foodgrains production of 76 million tonnes during Rabi 1987-88 instead of 69.5 million tonnes originally planned.

(e) and (f) There are adequate stocks of foodgrains with the public agencies to meet the present requirements of the public distribution system. The Government also keeps the option to import foodgrains as and when considered necessary.

Telecast of Regional Feature Films

775. SHRI S. S. AHLUWALIA: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) what are the criteria being adopted by the Doordarshan in respect of telecasting regional feature films;

(b) what are the number of films telecast by the Delhi Doordarshan in each regional language during the period from 1st January, 1986 to 31st August, 1987;